

"We'll take a look," the Customs Officer said.



A
True
Story

Lady Manhunter

By James W. Booth

GUNS and ammunition in exchange for the "black stuff"—crude opium.

That, until early in 1938, when a small, slender American woman stepped in and smashed crime where men had failed, was the illegitimate business of the supposedly-legitimate Chinese importing firm of Wat Sang Company, with offices on Vancouver's East Pender Street, and the wily, stoical Gordon Lin, who the West Coast underworld also knew as Lin Fung Duck, as its directing head.

For 15 years, he and his slant-eyed

conspirators successfully smuggled opium into British Columbia from Hong Kong, and Lüggers, Mausers and Thompson machine guns out to their native China. Despite deep-rooted suspicion of their knavery, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Dominion Customs authorities were never able to secure the evidence to convict them.

Shrewd and cunning, they not only pulled the curtain of secrecy tight about their actual dope landing and munitions shipping operations, but were clever enough to shroud even their casual

"business" communications in a code so baffling that no one in Canada could decipher it.

The latter fact became annoyingly apparent last Autumn. Then, the Mounties seized copies of 27 cablegrams, which had been sent from Vancouver to one Yick Sang Yuen, in Hong Kong, and, although unsigned, charged to the Wat Sang Company. Here, at last, they hoped to find a clue which would enable them to break up the cagey combine.

But when they examined the cablegrams it seemed as though they were still up against a stone wall. For each of them contained nothing but a gibberish of unrelated letters. One read: UICCA MASUA AGUSO GUKUU INVIA EIV. Another: ANABA MOYUY-IVAVO IASEY. A third: UUUUA MAVAN AGINA TAWIE LAIBU NONEF EVUNA. They were so much Greek to the Canadians. Neither the code experts of the RCMP nor of the Customs Service could make head or tail out of them.

Still, they were convinced that somewhere in the enigmatic dispatches was the evidence they were seeking, and also, that somewhere was someone who could decipher them and produce that evidence.

And so a long distance telephone call went through from the headquarters of the Mounties, at Ottawa, to the United States Treasury Department, at Washington, D. C.

"We need the services of your best cryptanalyst, or code breaker," Canada said. "We're completely stumped, and we must break this case."

"You need Mrs. Elizabeth Smith Friedman," answered the Treasury.

And Mrs. Friedman drew the assignment.

First and only woman cryptanalyst in the service of the United States Government, Mrs. Friedman is attached to

the Intelligence Unit of the Coast Guard. She does not look the part of a criminal tracker. To see her one would never imagine that she has been instrumental in supplying the clinching evidence which has put many a law breaker behind the bars of a Federal penitentiary. Petite, with bright curly hair tinged with red lights, and soft, intelligent blue eyes, she looks more like a quiet, devoted wife and mother, a role incidentally, which she also fills capably as that of code breaker. For she is the wife of Lieutenant-Colonel William F. Friedman, chief cryptanalyst of the United States Army, and head of the Signal Intelligence Service, and mother of a 15-year-old daughter and 12-year-old son.

But hardened Treasury agents, who have tussled with crazed dope dealers in the bowels of a half-dozen Chinatowns, matched wits with crafty jewel smugglers along New York's waterfront, and fought gun battles with underworld ruffians attempting to slip human contraband across the Mexican border, do not hesitate to give her credit for many of their successes. In case of doubt when stalking a quarry, they invariably enlist her aid.

"Get hold of some of the mob's correspondence," they say, "and turn it over to Mrs. Friedman. Then, we'll start getting somewhere."

She broke the famous *I'm Alone* case, which strained Canadian-American relations back in prohibition days, by deciphering code messages and proving American ownership of the vessel. By breaking down secret dispatches, she turned up the missing link in the evidence that brought the infamous Ezra twins, Judah and Isaac, San Francisco's cleverest and most successful narcotics smugglers, to justice. She plucked code messages from a bootleg

radio station out of the ether and speedily decoded them to enable the Coast Guard and Customs Service to seize the *Homewood*, most audacious of rum runners. She played an important behind-the-scenes role in the sensational affair of the *Marabella*, rowdy pirate ship sought by a half-dozen nations.

But the recent Gordon Lin case tested her ingenuity and resourcefulness as no other case has done. For it meant deciphering a Chinese code when she did not know a single word of Chinese.

There are several hundred ways of attacking cipher messages. Some codes are so simple and obvious—although they look complicated to inexperienced users—that one glance is sufficient to tell the trained eye how to proceed. Others lead to a tremendous amount of work before they can be broken. Still, Mrs. Friedman has yet to find one that could not be broken if enough work was put on it. In short, what one mind has locked up, she can unlock.

From years of experience she knows there can be only one correct reading to a cipher message. An incorrect solution may fit up to a certain point, but it is sure to strike a snag somewhere along the line. So, it is a case of trying over and over again until you get what you are after.

SCRUTINIZING the cablegrams seized by the Mounties, she was quick to see that a five-letter enciphered code group had been used by the smugglers. But that was all she had to go on. From there on, it was "cut and try," as the cryptanalysts express it, until she found a solution that fitted.

Finally, however, she had all of the messages reduced to Chinese characteristics, and felt instinctively she was getting somewhere. For in one of them she

turned up the word "Fook," the name of the most common grade of opium.

Then the result of her work was turned over to Yii Cheong Leong, official Chinese interpreter of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, for translation. The meaningless gibberish UOUA MASAU AGUSO IVVIA EIY turned out to be *Cable 3000 select fully list Wat Sang*. ANABA MOYUY IVAVO IASEY was made to read, *Ship interesting grocery goods*. UOUA MAVAN AGINA TAWIE LAIBU NONEF LITET EVUNA when broken down meant, *Cable 7000 to pay annual accounts*. Another cablegram was deciphered to read, *Which boat will carry goods. Reply quickly and have goods ready*. Still another, *Cabled you 1000: Pay How 300 and Hoy 200. Ask Sing Park if another 1000 is paid if it is possible to pay Ponto. Reply quickly*.

The other messages revealed equally damaging insights into the ramifications of the ring—other amounts of money paid, the quality and quantity of opium smuggled into British Columbia, the names of vessels plying between Vancouver and Hong Kong on which the dope had been shipped, and of those members of the crew who had slipped it ashore.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Dominion Customs authorities had the evidence they needed. Raids followed, and with them the seizure of large quantities of opium, and guns and ammunition destined for illegal shipment to China, as well as the arrest of Gordon Lin and four of his slant-eyed confederates, Chang Sang, Wong Ying, Lee Hoy and Lum How.

And in late January, 1938, Mrs. Friedman went West to Vancouver to testify at their trial, and furnish the key evidence, which ended their fifteen years of illicit activity and drew long prison terms for each of them.

CIPHERS are used in peace and war, in love and in business, by courtiers and criminals. Diplomats send important messages in cipher. When money is telegraphed to you, the dispatch is in cipher. In fact, ciphers have been used for secret messages for thousands of years, but it was not until after the World War that the word cryptograph made its appearance in the dictionary.

The first book on the subject, however, was written way back in 1518 by the German monk, Trithemius. But neither the simple Friar nor later scholars could foresee the far-flung ramifications of his subject, and literature dealing with it was still in very elementary form in the fateful month of August, 1914.

But conditions changed overnight. The World War brought such a propulsion into the future that secret writing developed very rapidly and grew into complexities undreamed of. When the United States entered the war it was in a worse plight than most of the European allies. It had practically nobody to read enemy ciphers and the few capable of this were not banded together in a unit, but scattered throughout the country.

Elizabeth Smith Friedman—she was Elizabeth Smith then—was one of them.

The year previous she had graduated from Hillsdale College, Michigan, after previously studying at Wooster College, Ohio. She had specialized in English literature, and had become interested in the theory that Sir Francis Bacon wrote the works credited to William Shakespeare. Casting about for a job, she made the acquaintance of George, Fabyan, millionaire manufacturer of cotton fabrics, who not only owned the most extensive library on cryptic writing in the United States, at his Riverbank, Ill., research laboratory,

but possessed an unquenchable conviction that Bacon's hand was responsible for the writings of the Bard of Avon. Always on the lookout for intelligent young scholars, who would enter his laboratory and spend long hours delving deep into the cryptic mysteries for the hidden key which would prove his contention, he took a fancy to the youthful college graduate and employed her.

At Riverbank, she received her baptism as a cryptanalyst. She learned that the whole science of cryptography is based on the mechanics of languages. She learned that a cipher can be made by using other letters or symbols in place of the correct one, and that to decipher such a message, it is necessary to know which letters of the alphabet occur most frequently in general use. She found that research has determined that *E* is the most used letter in the English language. On the average printed page, 15 percent will be *E*, whereas only 2 percent will be *K X Q J* and *Z*. In fact, the order of frequency of letters used after *E* has been proven to be *T A O I S H R D L C U F M P W G Y B V K X Q J Z*. The most common combination is *TH*, and the commonest word *THE*.

This knowledge is the basis of the cryptanalyst's work. Suppose, for example, *BZ* are the most used letters in a message a code breaker is trying to decipher. If so, he or she knows instinctively it means *TH*, and that if *BZX* appears most that means *THE*.

Of course, Elizabeth Smith knew that in English there are all the final *E* and *S* words, the adverbs ending in *LY*, the *ED* ending on the past tense, the diphthongs *TH*, *CH* and *WH*, and the *G* with its *U* satellite, and so on. But she now learned that no system of cryptic writing that is intended to be read can avoid these repetitions. Even

if the symbol for *A* is *G* in the first line, 625 in the second line, and an originally deciphered symbol in the third, there must be a rhythm in the shifts of the symbols which eventually will betray *A* to the expert cryptanalyst. And deciphering the first half dozen letters, any code breaker will tell you, is half the battle.

She learned all these things and more—all about the Bacon cipher, which the Elizabethan philosopher invented more than 300 years ago, and which was solved along about 1880 by Ignatius Donnelly. Consisting of five plain text letters for every cipher letter, it is called the most dangerous cipher in the world because it is capable of being infinitely varied and almost perfectly disguised.

But, while she became familiar with it, and the knowledge she acquired proved invaluable in later years, she did not succeed in applying it to Shakespeare, any more than Donnelly had been able to do years before, and thus prove her employer's contention. However, she did meet William F. Friedman, a brilliant, young geneticist in the Fabyan laboratories, and convert him to the romance of cryptography. He, in turn, won her heart.

They were married early in 1917, and in April the United States was at war. Then the question of whether Bacon wrote Shakespeare, or whether he didn't, no longer concerned those at Riverbank. For the laboratory was turned over to the Government, and became a training school for military cryptanalysts.

William Friedman was commissioned a First Lieutenant in the Army Intelligence Service, and went overseas, where he was attached to AEF headquarters, at Chaumont. There he broke some of the most difficult codes that

ever faced strategists, and made possible an insight into the military messages of the German armies, which contributed in no small measure to the success of the Allied forces.

Mrs. Friedman remained behind to train bright, young "shavetails" in the science of cryptography, and write the first chapter of the 20-year drama of international intrigue and high adventure in which she has been the heroine.

Those hectic war days saw the smashing of a fantastic conspiracy of Hindus and Germans in the United States to incite insurrection in British India to the injury of the Allied cause.

Berlin was implicated. A Royal Indian Prince cast his lot with the plotters. The secret services of both the United States and Great Britain pursued conspirators along a globe-encircling trail. Slender threads of evidence were carefully woven into the pattern of fact. And then, finally the trial and climax at San Francisco.

THE jury had returned the verdict of guilty. The courtroom was slowly emptying. The turbaned Hindu prisoners, imperturbable in their shroud of Oriental mysticism, were waiting to be led away.

Then, suddenly one of them, little Ram Singh, slid quietly over to where Ram Chandra, another conspirator, was gliding up the aisle.

From beneath his jacket, he jerked a revolver and poured four bullets into the defenseless body of his countryman. Ram Chandra reeled and pitched forward on his face.

Turmoil seized the courtroom. Then another shot rang out, and Ram Singh also died.

For big, six-foot United States Marshall James H. Holahan, raising his arm above his head in order to shoot over

the lawyers and witnesses in front of him, drilled the slender Hindu in the heart.

To Ram Singh, Ram Chandra was a traitor to the cause, and so he had dealt him what he considered a traitor's deserts.

At the trial he had listened to the reading of a decoded document—evidence, which, when translated into plain language, was deadly testimony against the plotters. And to him there was just one explanation of the deciphering. Ram Chandra had divulged the cipher to their enemies.

He was positive the code was so well devised that no outsider could possibly break it down without possessing the key. And the key had been held in sacred secrecy by a tiny band of men, including himself—and Ram Chandra.

It was what is known in cryptography as a book cipher. In short, whenever the Hindu conspirators wanted a cipher symbol for a certain letter they turned to any page in a book that they had agreed upon upon themselves, found the letter they wanted, and then referred to it by page, line and letter. Thus 63-4-27 meant the letter would be found on page 63, line 4, and would be the twenty-seventh in the line.

But Ram Chandra was not a traitor to his cause. The murdered man had not given away the cipher. Nobody had given it away. It had been discovered by the patient work of Mrs. Friedman, a woman who had never seen any of the Hindus implicated in the conspiracy.

And she had accomplished it without access to the book used by the plotters. For the book was not found until just before the trial commenced, and then through a fluke. But it was no fluke that enabled her to turn up the damaging evidence. She did it entirely by comparing the cipher with certain known

words, such as the names of conspirators arrested, and finally breaking it down.

WITH the advent of prohibition the underworld picked up the science the World War had made as exact as geometry, and turned to code making to disguise its illicit transactions. The result was that very shortly the Treasury Department's law enforcement agencies found themselves in possession of all sorts of strange messages, which were so many enigmas to them, because they had no one to decipher them.

So, in 1923, Mrs. Friedman, now thoroughly convinced that if Bacon had anything to do with Shakespeare's plays he had neglected to leave a cryptic clue to the fact, joined the Intelligence Unit of the Coast Guard, and established its cryptographic section.

Since then she has helped break up many big criminal syndicates and smuggling combines, and has saved Uncle Sam hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Her services are not limited to the Coast Guard, but are available to all the Treasury Department's criminal-tracking forces.

In the case of the infamous Ezra twins she served both the Narcotics Bureau and the Customs Service.

Born in Shanghai, these two, Judah and Isaac, had figuratively been suckled on opium, for their father, a British subject, who migrated from Bagdad, Iraq, had headed the Chinese Opium Combine, a legitimate enterprise, which imported the drug from India. He had grown rich stultifying the minds of the Chinese. When he died he was worth many millions, and the twins had inherited their share, along with their brothers and sisters.

But they squandered it in fast living.

Even then, however, they did not cease their playboy careers. There were still fast women and fast horses, gambling and drinking for them, because they continued to draw upon their brothers.

In 1920, Isaac drew too heavily. He absconded with \$100,000, fled to the United States, and settled in San Francisco. His twin brother, Judah, left behind, was broke. And then, suddenly he was rich again, with a luxurious home in the French concession, speedy, imported English motor cars, and a dark-eyed mistress.

He had turned to dope smuggling, for the importation was no longer legal in China, having been outlawed by treaty, in 1917. From France by devious routes—sometimes across the trans-Siberian railway, sometimes by steamer out of Marseille—he brought in vast shipments of morphine, ingeniously concealed in false compartments of cans of milk.

In Shanghai's underworld they praised him and considered him a master mind. And in honor of his warped genius they bestowed the soubriquet *Black Beetle* upon him.

And then one day there was milk in the cans, but nothing in the secret compartments, except rags. The unscrupulous French dope dealers had double-crossed him, and he was broke again—out \$125,000.

He swore vengeance. He searched the underworld of Paris for those who had swindled him, and penetrated deep into the half-worlds of a dozen other Continental cities seeking them. But in vain.

Now the Shanghai underworld laughed at him. Not so the wily Tih Tsing Pao, wealthy head of the newly organized Dah Loong Tea Company, which dealt not in tea, but in dope. He had use for one like Judah Ezra, espe-

cially when he had an unscrupulous brother in the United States.

In native sing-song fashion, interspersed with Chinese proverbs, Tih Tsing Pao told him how the Japanese, needing money for munitions, were assisting in the venture by loaning their chemists to superintend the manufacture of morphine and other drugs, and how he might wax rich again if—

It was not long afterward that Judah Ezra became a partner in the Dah Loong Tea Company, and his unscrupulous brother, Isaac, commenced making cautious contacts in the city's Chinatown.

Finally, Judah joined him in the United States, and an almost ceaseless flow of morphine and other drugs started pouring mysteriously through the Golden Gate and out into the illicit channels of trade all up and down the West Coast.

In a murder case there is always a *corpus delicti*. Detectives work back from there to catch the killer. But in a narcotics case it is the reverse. One has to follow a devious trail from peddler to runner to contact man to distributor and then, finally, to the brains of the ring before the flow of dope is stopped at its source.

But first there has to be a tip-off along the trail.

For two years Treasury agents, both Narcotics and Customs men, sought such a tip-off to the Ezras, and always they came smack up against a dead-end. Small-time dope peddlers by the score were seized and questioned. Addict after addict, some trembling for the need of a "shot," others arrogant or boastful because of the false courage the needle had given them, were scooped up in the dragnet and grilled at length. But always the whine was the same, "I don't know nothin'."

Then, one foggy night in April, 1933, the Federal agents arrested a sniffing "bindle pusher," and she babbled what little she knew. It wasn't much, only that she obtained the morphine she peddled from another hag, one Annie, the Dope, but it was enough. For Annie blabbered also, and involved still another of her kind.

So the agents followed the trail, with the squealing of first one and then another of the dope ring, women and men alike, pointing the way, until they had woven a net of evidence around the cagey twins from Shanghai. But it wasn't woven tight enough to insure their conviction.

One more clinching bit of evidence was needed, and it came from Mrs. Friedman, far across the continent in Washington.

For, closing in on their quarry, the agents in San Francisco learned that Judah Ezra maintained a lock box under the name of George E. Merryfield at the central Post Office, and seized several telegrams from Shanghai, which had been mailed to him there.

They presented a mad mixture of seemingly meaningless letters and scattered numbers to the Treasury men. But the small, slender cryptanalyst in Coast Guard headquarters spotted the messages as representing a double code system, with a constant shifting of symbols, as soon as they came over the teletype from the West Coast. Then quickly she went to work on them.

An hour or so of concentrated effort and she was getting somewhere. WERVU became smoking opium. WYSIV turned out to mean heroin. WUSET was deciphered as cocaine. WYRRA was fashioned into drums of tung oil containing hidden compartments, and when Mrs. Friedman fitted the numeral 5 in front of it, she knew that 5 tung oil drums

figured somewhere in the mystery. And when she decoded WUVNE, she knew there were fifty drums in all, but that only five had hidden compartments.

Quickly thereafter the complete message was deciphered and the Treasury agents in San Francisco had the information they needed to clinch the case. For it revealed that the 50 drums of tung oil had been shipped to the Ezras aboard the Japanese freighter *Asama Maru* by Dah Loong Tea Company, and that in the secret compartments of five of them were 520 tins of smoking opium and 20 sample tins, 70 ounces of cocaine, 70 ounces of morphine and 40 ounces of heroin.

It was a shipment of dope worth \$300,000 wholesale value, but \$2,000,000 if it ever reached the illicit channels of trade.

But it never did. Treasury agents saw to that. They were waiting when the *Asama Maru* reached San Francisco on June 2, 1933 to seize the 50 drums of tung oil. And in the secret compartments of five of them they found and confiscated the vast hoard of mind-wrecking dope.

As for the Ezra twins? Today they are serving prison terms of 12-years each in the McNeil Island, Wash., Federal Penitentiary. So definitely did Mrs. Friedman supply the missing link in the evidence against them that they didn't even fight the case. They simply pleaded guilty.

A LOT more was at stake when Mrs. Friedman stepped in, put her exhaustive knowledge of cryptography to work, and solved the ownership of the *I'm Alone*, for the United States was in an embarrassing diplomatic spot.

It was shortly after daybreak of March 20, 1929 that the Coast Guard cutter *Walcott* sighted the rum runner,

flying the Canadian flag, and with 2,800 cases of assorted liquors aboard, at anchor in the neighborhood of Trinity Shoals, off the Louisiana Gulf coast. Well inside the 12-mile limit of America's maritime jurisdiction, the master of the vessel hove up anchor and scooted for the open sea the instant he spied the cutter approaching, and refused to obey a call to heave to for boarding and examination. Instead, he continued his course, and for the entire day sailed toward the Mexican coast, with the *Walcott* in pursuit. It wasn't until then that he hove to and allowed the commanding officer of the cutter to board him for inspection. After that the pursuit started all over again.

The morning of the third day another Coast Guard cutter, the *Dexter*, summoned by radio, joined the chase. Signals were flown instructing the *I'm Alone* to either stand by or be sunk. But she paid no heed. She continued on her course. Then the *Dexter* opened fire with her three-pounder, and screaming shells sent the rum runner to the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico, with the Canadian flag flying.

One member of the crew lost his life when he jumped into the storm-lashed sea. The others were saved and brought into New Orleans in irons. In Canada, and even on the floor of the British House of Commons, there was a furor. The Canadian Government filed a claim against the United States of \$365,000, for loss of the vessel and its cargo.

It was the Dominion's contention that the vessel and cargo were Canadian-owned. The United States, on the other hand, held to the claim that the ship was the property of a New York rum syndicate, and its chance of easing off the embarrassing diplomatic spot hinged entirely on proving it. For if this could be accomplished, then the insult to the

Canadian flag could be amicably adjusted by a formal apology and a small cash indemnity.

Treasury agents, with alert ears to the ground for clues in bootleg hideouts along the coast, and in such rum ports as St. Pierre Miquelon, The Bahamas and Belize, British Honduras, overheard mouthings about a certain Big Jim, a Dan and a Frank. But for weeks there was no hint as to their identity, or in what manner they were tied in with the *I'm Alone* case. Then bit by bit fragmentary evidence was pieced together. It simply indicated they were on the right trail, but didn't prove anything.

But then Mrs. Friedman arrived in New Orleans and plunked 23 decoded cablegrams down on the desk of Edison Shamhart, Supervising Customs Agent, and now head of the Customs Service Agency, the investigating branch of the Custom Service. Copies of the original messages, all sent from Belize to "Harforan," an unregistered code address in New York, had been subpoenaed from the cable company. Shamhart cast one look at the translations and felt better about the whole affair. Again the petite Treasury Department cryptanalyst had unlocked what another mind had locked up.

All manner of incriminatory evidence was there—the *I'm Alone's* movements, loading dates and destinations, cargoes and liquor prices. Everything except the tie-up with the owners. But the rest was simple sleuthing. With the unregistered code address to go on, Treasury agents stopped chasing will-o'-the-wisps, and concentrated on tracing the receiver of the "Harforan" messages. And in short order they had Dan Hogan, half owner of the *I'm Alone* in custody.

It took longer to locate Marvin Clark,

the "Big Jim" they whispered about in the rum ports, and Frank Réstman, the other two owners of the shelled rum ship. But by the time Chief Justice Duff of the Canadian Supreme Court and former Justice Van Dévanter of the United States Supreme Court got around to sitting as a court of arbitration, in Washington, in December, 1934, the American ownership of the *I'm Alone* was no longer a matter of doubt.

Mrs. Friedman's cryptography proved the United States' contention, and a formal apology by Secretary of State Hull and the payment of \$50,000 for the flag insult and the loss of the crew's property wrote finis to the embarrassing affair.

THERE was no element of time involved in the code breaking necessary to establish the ownership of the *I'm Alone*, but Mrs. Friedman was up against the tough problem of minutes in the capture of the *Homerwood*. What's more, it meant picking disguised dispatches out of the air lanes before deciphering them, with always the risk of an error in receipt. If there was such a slip-up, the chance of accurate decoding would be that much lessened.

Clamping on his ear phones in the waning days of prohibition, Coast Guard Radioman B. E. Howell intercepted a code message that immediately aroused his suspicion. He jotted it down, and it was rushed over the teletype to Headquarters. There Mrs. Friedman broke it to read, "Heave your anchor immediately and get underway. Stand up river to Albany," and Coast Guard officers knew at once that something was decidedly fishy. For no vessel engaged in legitimate trade, they realized, would be receiving such orders in code.

But they could not visualize the audacious rum smuggling plot that was being launched with the coded instructions. Out of St. Pierre Miquelon, with a half-million dollar cargo of choice liquors, the *Homerwood* was slipping into New York on a daring dash that was to take her through the lower and upper bays and on up the Hudson River. But not as the *Homerwood*. Instead, she flew false colors and bore the innocent name, *Texas Ranger*.

Knowing there was such a vessel, a freighter of the Newtux Line, and that it was due in New York that night, the smugglers had camouflaged the rum runner to look just like her. The name *Texas Ranger* was emblazoned on her sides, on her life boats and life rafts, while the painting of the ship's hull, superstructure and life boats was identical in every detail with that of the Newtux line freighter.

She passed Sandy Hook, signaling the tower observer she was the *Texas Ranger* bound for Erie Basin, Brooklyn, for minor repairs. With the freighter expected, there was nothing to arouse suspicion. Off Weehauken, a harbor patrol boat hailed the rummie. From darkened bridge, the captain shouted he could not stop because of the tide, but that he was the *Texas Ranger* bound for Albany. Again no suspicion was stirred up, for the patrol boat likewise expected the Newtux Line freighter. The rum runner continued on her way up the Hudson, and the patrol boat went about other business.

Bold and daring as was the smuggler's plot, they did not get away with it, however. They thought no feature had been left to chance, but they overlooked the small, slender woman cryptanalyst at Washington. For with her decoding of the first message that was plucked out of the air, both the Coast

Guard and the Customs Service swung into action to see what it was all about. But there was little to go on until other radio dispatches were intercepted.

Still there was enough activity on the part of the Treasury Department forced for the conspirators directing operations from the unlicensed radio station ashore to get scared.

And shortly Howell was intercepting another message and Mrs. Friedman was deciphering it to read, "Anchor boat in good place immediately. Take all men off in one of the life boats. Hide life boat if possible. Come ashore on New York side. Try not to attract attention. Call—" and there followed four code groups designating a telephone number—"when you come ashore."

"Come ashore on New York side" was an important clue to the Coast Guard and Customs. It showed them the approximate location of the rummie, for New Jersey borders the river on one side almost up to Nyack.

Then the code conversations became two-way, and Mrs. Friedman's job, one of decoding under pressure. But she was familiar with the cipher now and, with every minute counting, no minutes were lost.

"Shall I ditch gear?" the *Homewood's* master asked.

"Destroy tuning settings, and take out receiver coils," he was told.

"Shall I change name?" the rum runner came back, and the question afforded the Treasury forces a hint of how the vessel had succeeded in getting through the Bay and up the river without being stopped.

The shore station didn't bother with the question. It had more important things to think about now. "All off and raise anchor lights," it snapped in code. And then, with two Coast Guard cutters

hurrying upstream, and two automobile loads of Customs men speeding up Albany Post Road, the instructions became frantic, "Get off at once. Get off!"

They got off, and the master of the ship got away. But the crew of seventeen sun-tanned Nova Scotians fell into the hands of the Customs agents at Tarrytown. The Coast Guard seized the rum boat. And, because still another code could not baffle Mrs. Friedman, 25,000 cases of good Canadian rye missed helping to quench America's thirst.

THE alertness of a Customs Inspector, examining the baggage of an almond-eyed, exotic young woman embarking from the Japanese steamship *Heiyo Maru* at San Pedro, California, on August day, in 1934, was responsible for bringing her expert knowledge of cryptography into still another smuggling conspiracy—one climaxed by Oriental vengeance.

This woman's passport listed her as a tourist and her name as Maria Wendt. She claimed she was an Eurasian, the daughter of a German father and a Chinese mother. Actually, she was pure Chinese, and the incorrigible daughter of Wen Tsung Yao, once Commissioner of Foreign Affairs of the Nanking Government. Slickly, she had added the *dt* to her name in order to give it a Germanic ring, and beat passport regulations preventing her from obtaining a Mexican visa. She was enroute from Shanghai to Manzanillo, Mexico.

An odd rounded corner of one of her trunks caught the Custom man's eye and, aware of the trickiness of many who try to beat the Treasury's laws, he slipped a knife blade along it. A thin trail of white powder trickled out.

Maria Wendt was a dope smuggler, not an innocent tourist, and, ingeniously

concealed in false compartments of the trunk, were silk sacks containing fifty-four pounds of heroin.

It isn't a single, individual smuggler the Treasury Department wants as much as it is the brains in back of the smuggling and the source of supply. And so, when the woman offered to tell all she knew and implicate the higher-ups of the racket, she wasn't jailed. Instead, she was taken to a Los Angeles hotel, where she was kept under guard.

Somehow she escaped, and for a fortnight was the elusive quarry of Federal agents all over the country. She fled by plane to New York, and there agents of the dope ring hid her in Chinatown, awaiting the opportunity when she could slip aboard a steamer to Europe.

Wearing dark glasses and with a passport made out in the name of Mayline Wong, she finally tried to board the *Deutschland* one night just as the gangplank was about to be raised, but it was no go. Customs' agents were watching every ship, and her dark glasses and false passport did not fool them. They knew her by her gold teeth and amputated finger.

She talked after that. But no underling of a dope dynasty knows all of its inside workings. Nevertheless, the Treasury agents again had a tip-off along the trail, and code breaking by Mrs. Friedman and her assistants, as well as special Treasury attaches in China laid bare the rest of the grim picture.

By deciphering cablegrams, telegrams and correspondence, they identified the two leaders of the narcotics smuggling combine, Al Stey, an Alsatian, with a superintendent's job at the Paulum Hospital, in Shanghai, and Naftali Loeffelholz Brandstatter, a Polish national, whose vicious dope dealing ac-

tivities had not only long been listed in the confidential files of the Treasury Department, but known to the police of every European country.

Through the medium of cryptography, they knew the latter had slipped stealthily out of Shanghai, with trunks containing false compartments similar to those found in the luggage of the almond-eyed Maria Wendt. By ciphers and symbols, they followed his devious route to Rome, Algiers, Barcelona, and finally to Havana, where the Treasury Department stymied him completely. He tried flying to Mexico City, but the Mexican authorities would have no part of him. They shipped him back to Havana. There the Cubans suddenly tired of his presence, and ordered him deported aboard the Ward Line *Oriente* to New York.

Brandstatter's jig was up, and he knew it. Before the *Oriente* sighted Ambrose Lightship, he was found hanging from a cross-beam in his cabin—a suicide.

In Shanghai, Stey met no better fate. Police, seeking him with a warrant for his arrest, found him toward dawn one morning writhing in agony in a vacant lot in the French Concession. He was dying from a terrible poison administered by Chinese colleagues, who feared exposure if he lived—and talked. He didn't. No statement came from his lips before he passed away.

Maria Wendt fared better. She was sentenced to ten years in prison, and was lucky at that. For dope peddling is punishable by death before a firing squad in China.

NO story of Mrs. Friedman and her exceptional exploits as Uncle Sam's only woman cryptanalyst would be complete without a word or two about the rowdy auxillary schooner, *Marabella*,

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which took to the blue Pacific with the "black stuff" and aliens, once the equally-sinister *Hedwig* had banked her nose on Protos Reef in the China Sea and floundered.

There were sighs of relief in Washington in the early thirties when word came from the Orient that the *Hedwig* was no more. And well there might have been, for more than once the vessel had evaded the Coast Guard and the Customs and dumped both opium and human contraband on the West Coast.

But, with Chinese "stowaways" eager to pay 1,000 gold dollars each for transportation to the United States, and opium that cost a couple of dollars in Macao worth several hundred percent more in San Francisco, the stocky seewolf, Eugene Cohler, head of the ring owning the lost vessel, wasn't through.

In Los Angeles, he engaged Sigrid Ypma, a Dutch master, who had sailed the seven seas, and had no qualms about dope or coolie running, to skipper a new ship, and together they sailed for Shanghai.

But there no ship owner would chance his vessel. If they were to continue their nefarious enterprise, it meant building and that ran into money. So, they sought the ear of wily, old Wong Kwai-shun, Alias Wong Tin, who wasn't above making an illicit dollar, and painted him a rosy picture of the profits that would be his if he joined them. Greedily, he acquiesced, and shortly \$30,000 was forthcoming, and the keel of the *Marabella* laid in the Ching Ngai shipyard, at Hong Kong.

In China, the alert attaches of the Treasury Department were not in ignorance of what was transpiring. Each new development was checked and reported back to Washington. It knew of the set of Diesels, 200-horsepower each, and of the extra-powerful wireless that were

installed, and of the 150 rice bowls and chopsticks taken aboard as supplied.

Meanwhile, Lok Po Shan, who specialized in booking illegal passages to America for ambitious Celestials was passing out slips of paper in Chinese writing, which were to be presented to the captain of a certain big junk.

Each chit was evidence that the bearer, having paid a preliminary \$250.—the balance to be paid upon safe arrival in California—was entitled to transportation in the big junk from the Old Chinese Cemetery to the meeting place in the China Sea, where he would be placed aboard a mystery ship.

Other hints reached the Treasury that Wong Tin had gathered a galaxy of Chinese sing-song girls and bought several thousand tins of "black stuff" down in Macao, the opium headquarters of the East.

And then one morning the shipping page of a Hong Kong daily had an item announcing the new schooner, christened the *Marabella* had been granted registry under the jaunty flag of Panama, and sailed.

That night the big junk, loaded with prospective additions to America's Chinese population, all dressed as laborers to deceive the British harbor police, dropped down the China Sea for a meeting with the schooner.

But a day later the *Marabella* returned to Hong Kong reporting engine trouble, and soon after the junk came back and unloaded its disappointed laborers.

Meanwhile, Wong Tin was patiently waiting in Macao, while Treasury Department men fervently hoped that the *Marabella's* disability would lay her up for good.

But it didn't. The ship gracefully sailed a couple of days later into the mists of the East, leaving behind in

Hong Kong harbor a junkload of angry "stowaways" and a bewildered old Chinese gentleman lingering at Macao, wondering what was keeping his colleagues Cohler and Ypma.

He was doublecrossed. They had put one over on the mandarin, pocketing all of the money Lok Pa Shan had wheedled out of the coolies as an advance on their long-dreamed-of voyage to America. With a \$500,000 load of the "black stuff," picked up near the French island, Kwong Chau-wan, snugly stowed under her teak cabin floor, and numerous cases of Made-in-Japan Scotch whiskey in her hold, they pointed the *Marabella* toward the high seas and America.

All of Cohler's correspondence with his confederates in the United States, as well as his radio messages from the *Marabella*, were intercepted by

Treasury agents, and, while the code he used to disguise his operations was an intricate one, there yet has not been a cipher devised that Mrs. Friedman and the cryptanalysts, who work under her, cannot break. Uncle Sam knew his every movement, even before the *Marabella* slid down the ways at the Ching Ngai shipyard.

And when the government played its ace, and had the Republic of Panama cancel the ship's registry, the knell of the rowdy dope vessel was sounded.

Drama and adventure! It is written all through the exploits of Mrs. Friedman. But every code message she breaks down does not reveal a million-dollar conspiracy or a breathtaking intrigue. Sometimes she will work for days on one to find a simple statement from wife to husband that "all is well at home." It is all a part of her job.

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